



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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February 12, 2008

WEST VIRGINIA BULLETIN NO: WV300-8-11

SUBJECT: LTP – Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program Funds

Purpose: To inform employees of Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program funds for new contracts.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2008

Action Requested By: February 19, 2008

We now have Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) funds for new contracts. The amount is small in comparison to former years; \$111,000.00. To facilitate the rapid obligation of these funds, there will be no sign up period at this time. Instead, only applications taken before the end of the last ranking period are eligible. This means only applications taken before June 29, 2007 are to be ranked and considered for obligation.

First, check the 2007 WHIP applications for any that may not have been deferred and promoted onto the 2008 list. Defer and promote these applications as indicated. Then check the dates on each application by viewing it from the 2008 WHIP applications list. The date appears on the application information screen. Do not alter the date or other application information except to set the priority of all applications to "none". The ranking and tracking scores will be used to determine the order of funding so a priority is not needed. Having a priority other than "none" complicates the applications management process for the Farm Bill Programs Staff. If the application date is before June 29, 2007, then it is eligible and must be ranked before Monday, February 18, 2008. This is a very rapid turn around, but this money must be obligated on the same schedule as the EQIP funds, which means obligation by March 15, 2008 or the signing of the New Farm Bill. We will fund applications according to ranking until funds are exhausted.

These financial assistance dollars come with technical assistance funds that we need to meet expenses this fiscal year. Please work to quickly obligate these funds so we do not lose any of these dollars for the participants or our budget.



On January 22, 2008 the ProTracts release notes provided the following information:

- The agreement length is no longer selected on a drop down list for applications for AMA and WHIP but is calculated based on the practices scheduled and contract length requirements in 512.45; training materials have been posted on the ProTracts Home Page under reference materials.
- This is key information for your current WHIP management and obligation process. It is critical that the correct habitat type be selected to enforce the appropriate expiration rules.
- However, note that there has been a problem identified in ProTracts where practices are scheduled for only 1 year. This happens with both WHIP modifications and new contracts. The management years are not being appropriately added in the software to extend non-emergency contracts to the minimum of 5 years.
- The ProTracts team is aware of the critical issue and an email notice will be sent when it is corrected (within a few days). Until that time, do not bypass the ProTracts check rules process to obligate contracts as emergency/1 year agreements to bypass contracting policy.

If have any questions or need assistance, contact Bill O'Donnell, ASTC-Programs, at 304-384-7543, or JR Wolfe, Farm Bill Programs Specialist, at 304-284-7583.

/s/

KEVIN WICKEY
State Conservationist

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